

Minutes of the Meeting
April 2nd, 1998

Projects Reviewed

Convened: 8:30 am

West Galer Street Flyover

Beacon Avenue Medians

Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood Planning-Planning Commission involvement

South Lake Union Park Improvement

King Street Station Redevelopment

Adjourned: 4:00pm

Commissioners Present

Barbara Swift, Chair

Moe Batra

Gail Dubrow

Bob Foley

Gerald Hansmire

Rick Sundberg

Staff Present

Marcia Wagoner

Peter Aylsworth

Rebecca Walls

040298.1 Project: **West Galer Street Flyover**

Phase: Schematics

Presenters: Jill Marilley, Seattle Public Utilities

Tom Mahoney, CH2M Hill

Richard Miller, Seattle Transportation

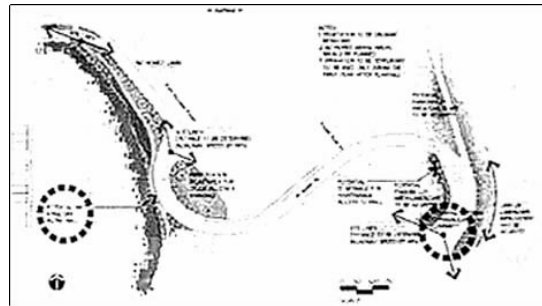
Time: 1 hr. (0.3%)

The West Galer Street Flyover project consists of a bridge over Elliott Avenue and the railroad tracks with ramps on either side. There will also be improvements to the current bike path frequently used by commuters.

The bridge will be a steel structure supported by pairs of concrete columns. A concrete cap beam will connect the sets of columns and support the steel beams. The ramps will be supported by Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) walls. MSE walls are economical and ideally suited for areas of fill. The bike path has been pulled away from the street with a six to seven foot strip of landscaping in between. There are opportunities to extend the park area and to create a beach area along the water. The east side of the project will primarily be left natural. Retaining walls will be constructed to protect the bridge from landslides. The next phase of the project includes community contact, detailed design development, and the development of the art program.



Galer Street site plan



landscaping plan



View south from Magnolia bridge

Discussion:

- Hansmire:** There seems to be a lot of concern in the Belltown community about visually terminating the waterfront in a flyover. This has become an issue in discussions about the Pier 70 flyover.
- Mahoney:** This is a totally separate project and is part of an overall problem solution for the west Galer Street traffic issues.
- Marilley:** West Galer Street is the last at-grade crossing north of Belltown.
- Hansmire:** Another concern at the Denny Regrade flyover is that it would allow trains to increase their speeds north of the tunnel. I don't have these concerns about this project, but raise the issues for discussion.
- Foley:** How do bicyclists cross from the east side of Elliott Avenue?
- Mahoney:** There will be a crosswalk near the bus stop just south of the flyover. Most of the bicycle traffic from the north does connect to the path on the west side.
- Dubrow:** The ramps look very much like freeway offramps. Did you consider placing the ramps parallel to the roadway. I am curious about the decision to focus artist involvement on the handrails, which is at a scale for pedestrians rather than cars.
- Swift:** I have a body of concerns about the series of bridges in the area. I also share the concern about limiting the artist's opportunities. The project addresses the functional issues very well, but it needs to address its role in the urban environment.
- Marilley:** The artist opportunities are not limited to the handrails. We have a list of opportunities for artist involvement. Regarding the urban setting, we wanted to keep the design simple in order to blend the bridge in with its surroundings.
- Mahoney:** We discussed several areas for artist involvement, such as the grillwork on the MSE walls with plantings and light fixtures. The railings are the most visible parts of the project for corridor commuters.
- Dubrow:** What is the scale of the art budget?
- Marilley:** It is limited. The project has a budget of \$12.1 million for design and construction. The City's portion will have a 1% for art budget of about \$50,000.
- Swift:** Too often people look to the artists to do the urban design work on a project. This project is functioning at both a pedestrian level and a vehicular level. I appreciate the decision to use steel for the bridge supports, but am still looking for a level of detail that addresses the pedestrian scale.
- Marilley:** The urban design in the area is a hodge podge of various elements. Our goal is to make a low profile, inconspicuous structure.
- Swift:** You have identified the criteria and the rationale for the design. I am not seeing any illustrations or presentation of the design process and how these conclusions were reached. At this point, I don't think that you are doing enough.
- Marilley:** The low impact criteria came from the community. They wanted the structure to be simple and functional.
- Hansmire:** The industrial handrails are appropriate for the context. We have already talked about other railing options that still meet the impact requirements. I like the idea of softening the MSE walls with screens and plantings.
- Dubrow:** The design seems to minimize the bridge span visually while maximizing the ramps visually. You have ideas of the solution but no principles to guide those decisions.
- Swift:** Do you have an Urban Designer or an Architect involved on this project?

- Mahoney:** Not specifically. We take pride in our work and try to pursue sensitive structural design that responds positively to the surrounding environment. We also engineered the swing bridge in .
- Swift:** I remember that bridge and seem to recall that there was a team of design professionals involved. This approach may help get through some of these issues quickly. Projects like this work best when multiple disciplines are involved in the design process.
- Dubrow:** You have done a good job of designing a bridge. It now needs to be scaled down through details and amenities. Utilizing an artist, urban designer, or other design professional will add to your tool kit.
- Hansmire:** I appreciate your not making it a fussy bridge.
- Foley:** I like the focus on the open water views, but I am concerned about the bike path northbound facing into the highest point of the MSE wall.
- Mahoney:** We have modified the alignment, moving the path away from the wall towards the water's edge.
- Hansmire:** Is the railroad going to require a fence on the sides of the bridge?
- Mahoney:** The railroad is happy about this project. There is some fear that fencing may be installed in the future.
- Dubrow:** You may need to design the bridge in a way that accommodates that future possibility.
- Swift:** It is a visually complex area and the choice to blend in is valid. There is a group of issues, under the categories of urban design, architecture, and landscape architecture, that still need to be developed.
- Marilley:** We are trying to address the landscape issues on the east and west sides where pedestrians will frequently be.
- Swift:** If you take a step back there are a body of design elements that need further attention. The prescriptive approach focuses on prices. I am looking for the project to be addressed as a whole.
- Marilley:** We are also leaving opportunities for the development of lingering elements along the shoreline.
- Wagoner:** There are places in the city There are interesting things to watch along that stretch of water. West Seattle project
- Mahoney:** The landscape has been put in within the last ten years.
- Foley:** With the MSE walls I would anticipate a one foot settlement. How will you deal with it?
- Mahoney:** Approximately 80% of the settling will come out in the first month of construction. The landscape architect has already done some studies of the area and we will bring in people with more visual expertise.
- Action:** **The Commission recognizes that the solution performs well functionally. The action taken at the March 5 meeting still stands as a framework for further development. The Commission looks forward to seeing the project early in the design development phase with specific points of the action having been addressed.**

March 5 Action:

The Commission appreciates the briefing. The Commission is supportive of the general approach to the project and makes the following recommendations;

- ***the Commission recommends continued attention to detail at all levels and especially to the project's scale and urban design features.***

- *the Commission supports the involvement of artists, sooner rather than later.*
- *the Commission also recommends careful attention to the greenbelt restoration and to a possible tie in with Myrtle Edwards Park improvements.*

In addition to the previous action, the Commission strongly recommends the early involvement of an urban designer, architect, or landscape architect.

040298.2 Project: **Beacon Avenue Median**
 Phase: Construction Documents
 Presenters: Bill Anderson, Seattle Public Utilities
 John Arnesen, Seattle Transportation
 Katherine Claeys, Seattle Transportation
 Shane Dewald, Seattle Transportation
 Linda Marleau, Seattle Public Utilities
 Time: 1 hr. (0.3%)

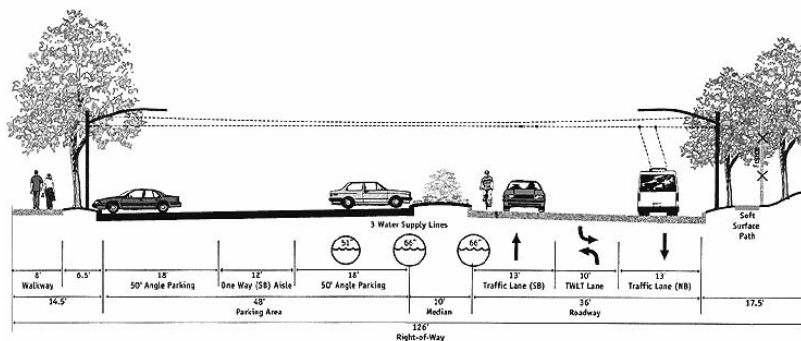
The Beacon Avenue Median project is currently in its fifth and final phase of development. It has been ongoing for approximately 25 years. It is about four and a half miles long between Spokane Street and Carkeek Drive, four miles of which have been completed. The south end of the median is almost in a rural setting while the north end is in an urban setting. Functionally, the median allows three main water supply lines to run along the ridge of Beacon Hill. The median is typically 40 feet wide with a multi-purpose path through the middle of it.

The final half mile, from Spokane Street to Snoqualmie Street, is surrounded by a public golf course, reservoir, and the VA Hospital. The golf course and the hospital are competing interests for parking space within the median. Since activity centers are primarily on the west side, the new road will be on the east side with parking on the west side. Therefore, the street in this section of the project will not be split around a central median. Instead it will be two lanes of traffic running on the east side, with a parking strip along the west, separated by landscaping.

Trolley wires are currently supported over the existing street by 12 foot mast arms approximately 110 feet apart. The community and Metro want to maintain the trolley service. Options for supporting the wires after street realignment include spanning support wires across the entire ROW, or using 30 foot mast arms from one side to span over the two lanes of traffic.



Aerial photo



Section through parking, planting strip, and street

Discussion:

Dubrow: Did the community like the plan?

- Claeys:** Yes, and they were very involved in the design process. There some issues still unresolved, but I think that we are about as close to a consensus as such a large group can be. Some of the community want a pedestrian signal at the main crossing.
- Dubrow:** Are there any unresolved issue for you?
- Anderson:** There are still some conflicting views between the community, the golf course, and the VA Hospital about parking.
- Swift:** How will the parking issue effect the project and when do you plan to complete construction?
- Anderson:** There is potential space for over 700 parking stalls. We have allocated space for over 300. The left over parking will be absorbed by the community. The project is on a fast track and should be completed in June of 1999.
- Dubrow:** Is there any feeling that the parking area should have uses other than parking?
- Claeys:** Some wanted it all to be landscaped. We have already reduced the parking spaces to allow for more plantings. We are at the bare minimum now.
- Anderson:** The Chamber of Commerce wants two south bound lanes.
- Swift:** The small amount of plantings work within the context of the two large landscaped areas on either side that mitigate the parking.
- Foley:** Will there be plantings between the parking and the street?
- Dewald:** Yes. We have gone through a number of different configurations. We have also done a study of the existing trees along the street to see which ones need replaced. The center strip of planting, between the street and the parking, is over a major water line. Therefore it will have primarily groundcovers and small shrubs. The landscape design is still being developed.
- Foley:** I am concerned that the parking area not getting adequate visual relief in the form of plants and trees.
- Claeys:** We are respectful of the code required landscaping for parking lots and the minimum buffer requirements. Whether or not to plant trees in the center median is still under discussion. Previous phases of this project have trees over the same water lines. This presents a problem for maintenance crews in the case of repairs and the Water Department is reassessing the decision to put trees over the water lines.
- Dubrow:** You may want to generate a couple of different landscape schemes with trees on the center median in order to figure out the number of possible trees that could be placed there. Then that number of trees could be figured into the landscaping budget but placed elsewhere within the community as neighborhood improvements.
- Hansmire:** I support putting trees on the center median. They would give the spatial definition that shrubs provide without the reduced visibility and subsequent security issues.
- Dubrow:** Who are the main users of the parking spaces?
- Arnesen:** Primarily golf course patrons and community center users. The VA Hospital parking into the right-of-way. Since they have a parking lot, we feel less obligated to provide parking for them than the golf course and community center.
- Swift:** There are many different tree root system types to choose from. It looks like there is about five feet of cover over the water lines.
- Dewald:** The Water Department is more concerned about accessing the lines for repairs in the future than about the tree roots damaging the lines.

- Swift:** It sounds like a minor issue. The long-term benefit of the street trees will outweigh the difficulties in accessing the lines for repairs or maintenance.
- Anderson:** It is currently a common practice to not plant trees over water lines.
- Foley:** Trees could be placed in strategic locations rather than in a continuous row.
- Wagoner:** Are there powerline issues for the existing street trees?
- Dewald:** There is a group of trees that are candidates for removal due to powerline work. We are looking at ways to replace them with trees of substantial scale. Others have recovered and are worth saving.
- Batra:** Is it possible to have the bike path next to the parking area rather than the street?
- Arnesen:** It is a shared bike/vehicle lane. There isn't enough room to make it a separate bike lane. It is intended for commuter use by people comfortable with riding in traffic. It is consistent with the bike uses south of this project. Slower bike traffic can ride on the pedestrian path. The cyclist groups at the community meetings were comfortable with it.
- Batra:** Did you consider perpendicular parking?
- Claeys:** Yes, we don't have the width required for perpendicular parking.
- Action:** **The Commission recommends approval of the project as presented with the following comments and recommendations. The Commission:**
- **appreciates the strong community involvement, resulting in a sensible compromise;**
 - **encourages the uses of street trees wherever possible;**
 - **recommends that the artist's efforts be concentrated on the main pedestrian crossing and the golf course entry.**

040298.3 Project: **Commission Business**

Action Items:

- A. MINUTES OF MARCH 19TH MEETING: Approved as amended.

Announcements:

- B. DELRIDGE-LONGFELLOW CREEK: Consultant Selection.
- C. AIA AWARD TO SEATTLE DESIGN COMMISSION: Wagoner reported.

Discussion Items:

- D. MUNICIPAL CENTER UPDATE: The City Council voted against placing Key Tower on the market at their April 6th meeting. The Joint Municipal Center Work Group will be meeting to discuss the proposed master plan and the future location options of Mayor and Council.
- E. WSCTC EXPANSION PROJECT LETTER REGARDING ARTIST BUDGET: Swift reported.
- F. COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Foley and Darwish reported.
- G. GROWING VINE STREET LETTER: Marcia Wagoner and Rebecca Walls briefed Land Use staff on the Growing Vine Street project
- H. SEATTLE CENTER HOTEL PROPOSAL LETTER: Wagoner reported.
- I. CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATION: The Design Commission has been asked by Councilmember Jan Drago to present to the Council regarding the Design Commission's function within City government and their current work plan.

040298.4 Project: **Neighborhood Planning**

Phase: Briefing
 Presenters: Susan Dehlendorf, Strategic Planning Office
 Time: .5 hr. (N/C)

37 Neighborhood Plans are under development in the city of Seattle. The Neighborhood Planning Office was set up as a temporary government agency to assist the neighborhoods in developing the plans, review the plans, and eventually have them approved by City Council. The neighborhood plans will be developed in three phases; conceptual, draft, and final. Each of these versions will be the result of extensive community involvement and input. The City will use a matrix system to organize the time frame in which the plans will be developed and implemented. After the first few plans have been reviewed the Neighborhood Planning Office will evaluate the plans as a group, looking for trends, consistencies, possible future projects, etc. The overall planning process will also be refined as the plans are developed.

Action: See following project for combined action.

040298.5 Project: **Neighborhood Planning - Planning Commission Involvement**
 Phase: Briefing
 Presenters: Marty Curry, Planning Commission
 Roger Wagoner, Planning Coordination
 Karen Daubert, Planning Commission
 Attendees: John Dodd, Admiral Neighborhood Planning
 Time: 1 hr. (N/C)

Planning Commissioners will be involved with the development, organization, and review of the Neighborhood Plans. Three to four Commissioners will review plans in each of the eight areas of Seattle; south/southwest, south/southeast, west Seattle, central, downtown, north/northwest, north/northeast, and north.

A Review and Response Team has been created within the Neighborhood Planning Office with the mission of ensuring the successful completion and implementation of the neighborhood plans. The Team's responsibilities include:

- work cooperatively across departments as partners with neighborhood planners and consultants;
- identify ways that the City can respond positively to 37 neighborhood plans;
- coordinate internal department review of plans at major milestones and written or in-person departmental responses;
- solve problems, develop creative approaches to ideas coming from neighborhood plans;
- apply technical expertise; and
- define policy issues and alternatives for higher level review (Cabinet, Mayor and City Council).

The Neighborhood Planning Office has also developed a set of questions to be used in plan evaluation by the Review and Response Team. Major topics of this questionnaire include content of the plan, resources and responsibilities, and plan consistency. The Neighborhood Planning Office staff will aid in refining the plans and will explore what kind of structure is needed interdepartmentally to track, monitor, and implement the plans.

Action: The Commission appreciates the briefing and has a better understanding of the neighborhood planning process. The Commission makes the following comments and suggestions:

In regards to the neighborhood planning process, the Design Commission makes the following suggestions:

- maintain a level of stewardship within the neighborhood community groups as a way of maintaining the plans over time;
- consider preservation and art issues while developing the neighborhood plans.

Concerning the City's role in the neighborhood planning and implementation process, the Design Commission makes the following recommendations:

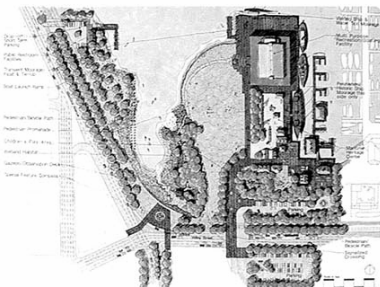
- continue to pursue ways of making interdepartmental responses as efficient as possible;
- establish a guaranteed amount of funding for each neighborhood as a basis for implementation;
- develop a database of plan information as a vehicle for developing public support on bond issues, and for tracking themes, funding, and individual projects;

Opportunities for Design Commission involvement may include,

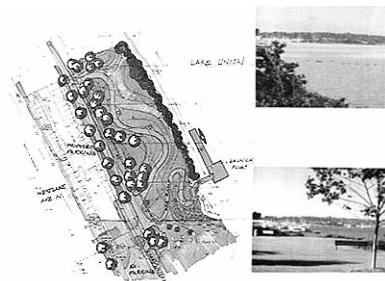
- review of the various projects as implementations of the neighborhood plans;
- RTA stations and station area development as concerning the neighborhood plans;
- assisting in the development and refinement of the mechanism the City uses to review and implement the plans.

040298.6 Project: **South Lake Union Park Improvement**
 Phase: Briefing
 Presenters: Richard Hennings, Department of Parks and Recreation
 Time: .75 hr. (0.3%)

A Master Plan for the South Lake Union Park area was completed in 1991. The schematic designs were presented to the public three to four weeks ago. Public comments included a strong desire to retain as much parking as possible. The boat plane dock to the north will be removed and most of the blackberry bushes along the water will be removed. The park will offer views of the lake, water access for non-motorized boat launch, and open space.



1991 South Lake Union Master Plan



South Lake Union Park Plan

Discussion:

Hansmire: Do you plan to remove the existing bulkhead?

- Hennings:** Though not part of this project, it is identified in the Master Plan. The Parks Department typically tries to make natural settings, but this park is designed around functional requirements.
- Swift:** It looks like the bulkhead and the wetland area are different than what is outlined in the Master Plan. Will you have to go back to City Council for approval of these changes?
- Hennings:** The existing park is not changing. I am unsure of the details relating to the parking area and the adjacent trail project.
- Wagoner:** The first set of improvements to the park were temporary. The improvements were done as placeholders for future work in order to keep the park as public space.
- Hennings:** I hadn't heard about that. The project has started and stopped repeatedly. As more people move into the area, needs and uses will change.
- Swift:** I have questions concerning the incremental development of open space in a rapidly changing area. I am concerned that a small piece is being developed without an understanding of the larger context. I realize also that, given the limited funds for developing park space, temporary projects often become permanent. It is difficult to comment on this project without considering the larger context.
- Hennings:** The design follows the Master Plan very closely for this portion of the Park development. Parking has been relocated to be adjacent to Westlake and the dock shown before has been relocated to the south to avoid aircraft traffic but all other elements shown. The dock shown in the previous layout has been moved south and there is no funding for the restrooms shown on the Master Plan.
- Swift:** Are there any time limitations for using the funds.
- Hennings:** Yes, the ALEA money has to be spent by the end of this year. The dock has to be fixed in place by October. We have tried to maximize the available open space.
- Wagoner:** Seattle Transportation is installing street trees in the West Lake corridor. You may want to at least extend that line of trees to the south as shown in the Master Plan.
- Swift:** It would be important to look at that issue. The draft plan for the South Lake Union Neighborhood shows an open space component. It is a necessity that the Master Plan go through the neighborhood planning process.
- Batra:** The lack of public restrooms in the area seems like a major issue.
- Hennings:** It is unfortunate that we don't have the budget to build a public restroom facility. It would cost approximately \$150,000. We also looked at installing temporary restrooms for summer use.
- Swift:** A request for restrooms also came out of the West Lake Union Corridor planning efforts. It is important to have these facilities.
- Hennings:** I agree. We are trying to allow for the future installation of restrooms in our plans. There are utilities at the north end of the site that could be accessed.
- Foley:** What is the project's budget?
- Hennings:** We have a \$130,000 construction budget.
- Swift:** The City, as a whole, needs to deal with the lack of public restrooms.
- Batra:** You may at least be able to stub out the water pipes to the property before the parking lot is paved. This would save time and money in the future.
- Sundberg:** Why don't you locate the restroom structure as a part of the plan?
- Hennings:** We are afraid that people will expect it to be built if they see it drawn.
- Batra:** Will there be a fee to launch watercraft here, as at Magnuson Park?
- Hennings:** No.
- Batra:** Perhaps a small launch fee could pay for the restrooms.

- Hennings:** The original plan had a restroom facility. After we were given funding, the cost was too high.
- Wagoner:** There was some hesitation toward having a beach in the Master Plan that encouraged people to enter the contaminated water. Is this still an issue?
- Hennings:** It was a concern. We received a lot of comments that requested a sand launch area in addition to the dock. We can use signage to warn people about entering the water.
- Batra:** In order to fulfill the Master Plan adopted by City Council, I think that the Parks Department should pursue ways to include restroom facilities.
- Foley:** In general, I am pleased to see another place for people to access the water.
- Action:** **The Commission recommends approval of the project as presented in the briefing and makes the following comments and recommendations:**
- **The Commission is pleased to see a place for people to access the water;**
 - **The Commission strongly urges the pursuit of restroom facilities as improvements indicated in the Master Plan and as significant public amenities;**
 - **The Commission recommends aggressive coordination with adjacent projects and Neighborhood Planning efforts to ensure that the planning funds are used efficiently.**
 - **The Commission recommends that the line of street trees established in the West Lake Union Corridor Improvement project be continued within or adjacent to this project.**

040298.7 Project: **King Street Station Redevelopment**
 Phase: Schematics
 Presenters: Gary Hartnett, OTAK
 Steve Leach, WSDOT
 Bill Will, artist
 Attendees: Kris Hill, Summit Inc.
 Time: 1 hr. (hourly)

The project is at the end of the schematic design phase. The building's history has been researched, every square foot has been photographed, seismic evaluations and foundation analyses have been done.

Structural repairs include replacing the first floor slab and many of the foundation piles. An underground river has eroded the soil underneath the east side of the station causing piles to settle and the floor to crack. The new reinforced concrete slab will connect the new and existing piles into a seismically sound floor system. The tower will have added steel cross bracing and will be tied to the building. Exterior brick and terra-cotta details will also be repaired. The tower clock will be repaired, cleaned, and reilluminated. The existing antenna towers will be permanently removed from the roof.

The metal sheathing on the exterior canopies will be replaced with glass, allowing more light on the platforms and into the building. The glass shingle roof on the tower will be repaired and reilluminated.

The interior of the building will have restored finishes as well as programmatic arrangements. The acoustical ceiling will be removed and the balcony will be restored. The mosaic floor in the

main lobby space will be carefully removed while the slab is replaced and then put back.

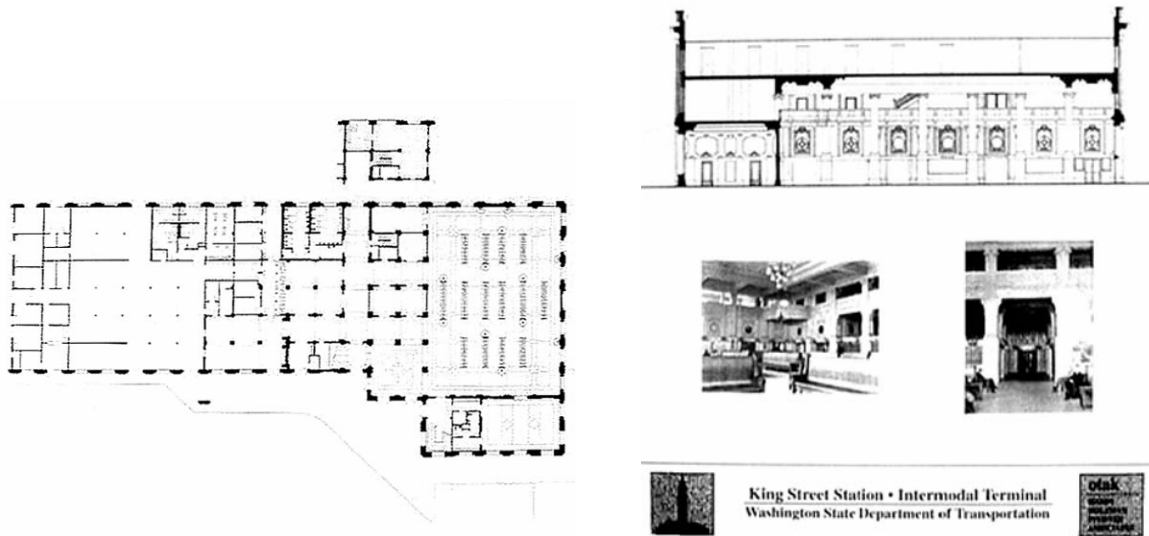
Programmatic changes include:

First Floor: ticketing and baggage will be moved to its original location in the center of the station, the primary entrance adjacent to tower on King Street will be restored, enclosure of existing exterior stairs will be removed as well as escalator;

Second Floor: a new north entrance off of the plaza level, restoration of balcony space around lobby, new rental spaces;

Third Floor: rental space.

The artist was hired three weeks ago and has spent that time learning about the project, the context, and in meeting with the design team. The artist views the building as a piece of art in itself and does not intend for the new artwork to compete with the existing station.



Ground Floor Plan

Cross Section and Historic Photos

Discussion:

- Hansmire:** The new platform covers are an opportunity for interesting lighting.
- Will:** Lighting will probably be a major part of the art program.
- Hartnett:** Kris Hill has produced a 16 minute video about our plans for the station which the AIA has asked us to present in their office.
- Swift:** You talked about the existing cracks and holes that have been acquiring over time. How are you thinking about repairing them; selectively or holistically. I am wondering how important some of the cracks, or flaws, are in marking the interim time in the stations history.
- Hartnett:** We are working with the state board, which has specific guidelines, on what has to be repaired.
- Leach:** Most of those decisions are beyond our control. The major cracks in the floor will be eliminated since we have to put in a new slab that connects all of the pilings.
- Swift:** An archaeological approach chooses to put back only a certain aspects of a time period versus a complete restoration of the entire time period.
- Leach:** Those are difficult decisions. I think that Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer and Associates do a nice job of balancing those issues, restoring but not completely obliterating.

It is a constant struggle. We should bring representatives from their design team to the next meeting.

Hartnett: We are exploring ways to cover the platforms. There are a lot of complicated questions to answer with every element of the project. We even explored the possibility of a massive train shed covering the entire platform area.

Hansmire: We have recently reviewed the Weller Street Bridge. It seems a little more bulky in mass than necessary.

Hartnett: Keep in mind that the platform covers may connect to the bridge.

Leach: The two projects are relatively connected.

Swift: I appreciate the comprehensive nature of the presentation and your enthusiasm for the project.

Wagoner: You might also think about running that video on Channel 28 to gain wider exposure and possibly more public support and interest in the project.

Foley: I have some concerns about the seismic condition of Fourth Avenue. Has there been a change in its low-priority status?

Leach: Not yet. We should keep pressing since it is a good time with all the improvements in the area.

Action: **The Commission appreciates the comprehensive presentation of the project and enthusiastically recommends approval of the project as presented in schematic design.**